

Novena to Christ the King 2023

Introduction

In the essay published in October of this year, we reflected on the parables of the Kingdom as criteria of discernment according to the spirituality of Regnum Christi. Furthering this reflection as we approach the solemnity of Christ the King, we want to ask for the grace to take on the traits of the kingdom that the gospel suggests to us, by continuing to “Put on the Lord Jesus Christ.” (Rom 13:14)

When we make this reflection, it helps us to measure how much the gospel has taken root in our lives and to discern the ways in which the mission may continue to develop according to these principles, rather than falling back solely on principles of efficiency and human logic. When we are attentive to the guidance that Christ gives us, we can be confident that “The Kingdom of God is among you.” (Lk 17:21) It is a Kingdom that is like the wheat among weeds, a mustard seed, leaven in the dough, and treasure found in a field.

In the Gospels, Jesus also mentions some elements of the Kingdom which we must assimilate into our lives if we want to be true witnesses of his love: Christ’s kingdom is not a Kingdom of this world, but it is present in it; it’s a Kingdom moved by the impulse of love; it’s not built on our human securities; it’s a Kingdom of friends, not of servants; it’s a Kingdom of those who do not seek to be served, but to serve.

This year the Solemnity of Christ the King is celebrated with a liturgy of the Word that places the parable of the Kingdom front and center: the parable in which Jesus reminds us that he dwells in each person and that whatever we do with any of his little ones, we do to him. He himself, his Kingdom, his love, becomes present when we welcome others in their need and destitution, because he himself chose poverty, the cross, and the necessity of going out to meet us and share his love with us.

Meditating on the Kingdom that Jesus Christ came to establish, which is actually Christ himself, will help us in our daily struggle to become more like him so that we can make him present here and now.

Practical note: The novena consists of an opening call-and-response, followed by the relevant gospel verse, a moment of silence, and an optional reflection which may be said aloud or reflected on individually. Then the concluding prayer and invocation are said.

Friday November 17th, 2023 – Day 1

✠. Come, let us worship Jesus Christ, the King of kings.

✠. Come, let us worship Jesus Christ, the King of kings.

✠. The Lord's is the earth and its fullness, the world and all that is in it. It is he who set it on the seas; on the waters he made it firm.

✠. Come, let us worship Jesus Christ, the King of kings.

A Kingdom that is not of this world, but is in this world created by God.

Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would be fighting so that I would not be handed over to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm." Therefore Pilate said to Him, "So You are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say correctly that I am a king. For this purpose I have been born, and for this I have come into the world: to testify to the truth.

John 18:36-37

(moment of silence)

REFLECTION

Christ's Kingdom is "consecrated in the truth," and Christ invites us to go beyond human logic and securities to live according to the logic of the Kingdom. By living in truth, we are able to live with the faith, joy, peace, and trust that come only from him. He invites us to collaborate with him creatively in the mission of making him present in this world that he has created, that he saw was good, in which he invites us to discover the redeeming power of his love to make him present by going out to meet the needs of others. Concluding Prayer

✠. Let us pray:

Lord Jesus, guide us along your way so that we may be faithful to our identity and charism, becoming witnesses to the life of the Kingdom that you desire for us and that is already present among us because it is you yourself, and you are alive. Through Christ

our Lord.

℞. Amen.

℣. Christ, reigning with truth and integrity,

℞. Thy Kingdom Come!

Saturday November 18th, 2023 – Day 2

℣. Come, let us worship Jesus Christ, the King of kings.

℞. Come, let us worship Jesus Christ, the King of kings.

℣. The Lord's is the earth and its fullness, the world and all that is in it. It is he who set it on the seas; on the waters he made it firm.

℞. Come, let us worship Jesus Christ, the King of kings.

A Kingdom that is not passive, that takes the initiative to love.

“Everyone therefore who acknowledges me before others, I also will acknowledge before my Father in heaven; but whoever denies me before others, I also will deny before my Father in heaven. “Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword.”

Matthew 10:32-34

(moment of silence)

REFLECTION

“It is not that Jesus wishes to split people up. On the contrary Jesus is our peace, he is our reconciliation. (...) This word of the Gospel does not therefore authorize the use of force to spread the faith. It is exactly the opposite: the Christian's real force is the force of truth and of love, which involves renouncing all forms of violence. Faith and violence are incompatible! Instead, faith and strength go together. Christians are not violent; they are strong. And with what kind of strength? That of meekness, the strength of meekness, the strength of love” (Pope Francis, Angelus, August 18, 2013).

CONCLUDING PRAYER

℣. Let us pray:

Lord Jesus, take us away from the fears that divide us and separate us from our brothers and sisters, give us the courage to move forward, the inspiration, peace and generosity of the Holy Spirit to make your love present, you who are the Kingdom incarnate. Through Christ our Lord.

℞. Amen.

℣. Christ, reigning with your zeal for souls,

℞. Thy Kingdom Come!

Sunday November 19th, 2023 – Day 3

℣. Come, let us worship Jesus Christ, the King of kings.

℞. Come, let us worship Jesus Christ, the King of kings.

℣. The Lord's is the earth and its fullness, the world and all that is in it. It is he who set it on the seas; on the waters he made it firm.

℞. Come, let us worship Jesus Christ, the King of kings.

A Kingdom that is not built on our securities.

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

Matthew 5:1-3

(moment of silence)

REFLECTION

"The "poor in spirit" are those who are or feel poor, like beggars, in the depths of their being," says Pope Francis. Christ sent his disciples to collaborate in his mission with only their basic material needs covered, placing them in the hands of Providence. Thus he reminded them that it is not they who carry out the mission with their own strength, means, and apparent securities, but it is the grace and power of God working through

them, sustaining them, going out to meet people in their needs with his love that heals, and saving the world.

CONCLUDING PRAYER

✠. Let us pray:

Lord Jesus, increase in us the desire for spiritual goods, so that in detaching ourselves from the creatures of this earth, we may more ardently long for the treasures of your Kingdom. Through Christ our Lord.

✠. Amen.

✠. Christ, reigning in your poverty,

✠. Thy Kingdom Come!

Monday November 20th, 2023 – Day 4

✠. Come, let us worship Jesus Christ, the King of kings.

✠. Come, let us worship Jesus Christ, the King of kings.

✠. The Lord's is the earth and its fullness, the world and all that is in it. It is he who set it on the seas; on the waters he made it firm.

✠. Come, let us worship Jesus Christ, the King of kings.

A Kingdom of friends, not servants.

I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father. You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name.

John 15:15-16

(moment of silence)

REFLECTION

Christ continually reminds us that his Kingdom is governed by love and not by domination or status. To Christ, making the Kingdom present is not exercising a demonstration of strength, but of love and genuine concern for the good of the other, in whom Christ himself dwells: "as you did it to one of the least of these, you did it to me" (cf. Mt 25:40).

CONCLUDING PRAYER

✠. Let us pray:

Lord Jesus, you have called us to be close to you in a particular way through the spirituality of the Kingdom. In flame our hearts with your love and give us your understanding and charity toward our brothers and sisters. Through Christ our Lord.

✠. Amen.

✠. Christ, reigning with love,

✠. Thy Kingdom Come!

Tuesday November 21st, 2023 – Day 5

✠. Come, let us worship Jesus Christ, the King of kings.

✠. Come, let us worship Jesus Christ, the King of kings.

✠. The Lord's is the earth and its fullness, the world and all that is in it. It is he who set it on the seas; on the waters he made it firm.

✠. Come, let us worship Jesus Christ, the King of kings.

A Kingdom of those who do not seek to be served, but to serve.

But Jesus called them to him and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. It will not be so among you; but whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be your slave; just as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many."

Matthew 20:25-28

(moment of silence)

REFLECTION

In the Kingdom of Christ, to serve is to reign. Christ constantly showed his disciples, through his ministry and preaching, that he is introducing a new vision of the world with his love at its center. This is the radicality of the Gospel: "I was hungry and you gave me something to eat (cf. Mt. 25:35-40).

CONCLUDING PRAYER

✠. Let us pray:

Lord Jesus, in calling us to make your Kingdom present, you who are the Kingdom incarnate have called us to serve each person you place in our lives; grant us the generosity and humility to give of ourselves, making you present in every encounter, even if at times the mission is difficult or our service goes unnoticed, certain that we are pleasing to you. Give us the experience of your love and that you are here, with each one of us, with us. Through Christ our Lord.

✠. Amen.

✠. Christ, reigning and serving,

✠. Thy Kingdom Come!

Wednesday November 22nd, 2023 – Day 6

✠. Come, let us worship Jesus Christ, the King of kings.

✠. Come, let us worship Jesus Christ, the King of kings.

✠. The Lord's is the earth and its fullness, the world and all that is in it. It is he who set it on the seas; on the waters he made it firm.

✠. Come, let us worship Jesus Christ, the King of kings.

A Kingdom that is wheat among weeds.

Let both of them grow together until the harvest; and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, Collect the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn.

Matthew 13:30

(moment of silence)

REFLECTION

Christ waited until the right time for everything he did. He came at a specific time in history. He lived hidden for many years. His public life unfolded in particular times and ways. If He is our King, then we must learn to trust in his timing and plan, unafraid of the imperfections and weeds of life, trusting in the patient hope of God, who knows that evil does not have the last word in our lives and that what looks like weeds can also become good wheat.

CONCLUDING PRAYER

✠. Let us pray:

Lord Jesus, help us to accept the circumstances that you place before us in our lives, knowing that we must learn to accept the bad with the good. We thank you for all the gifts that you have given us, and seek the understanding that comes from the Holy Spirit, so that we may become instruments through which you can transform even the most painful and difficult situations into moments of grace. Through Christ our Lord.

✠. Amen.

✠. Christ, reigning with patience,

✠. Thy Kingdom Come!

Thursday November 23rd, 2023 – Day 7

✠. Come, let us worship Jesus Christ, the King of kings.

✠. Come, let us worship Jesus Christ, the King of kings.

✠. The Lord's is the earth and its fullness, the world and all that is in it. It is he who set it on the seas; on the waters he made it firm.

✠. Come, let us worship Jesus Christ, the King of kings.

A Kingdom that springs from littleness, like a mustard seed.

The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field; it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches.

Matthew 13:31-32

(moment of silence)

REFLECTION

Christ the King was also once a small, defenseless child, not even capable of walking on his own. It is he who shows us how to take up the calling to greatness that we have within, particularly by showing us our dignity and freedom as children of God.

CONCLUDING PRAYER

✠. Let us pray:

Lord Jesus, recognizing our littleness, we come before you to ask you to guide our steps on the path of holiness, however insufficient we may feel. For, as Pope Francis says, "holiness is not a human conquest, it is a gift we receive: we are saints because God, who is the Holy One, comes to dwell in our lives." As we become more docile members of your Kingdom, show us the truth of our vocation, by which you make yourself ever more present in the world. Through Christ our Lord.

✠. Amen.

✠. Christ, reigning with humility and truth,

✠. Thy Kingdom Come!

Friday November 24th, 2023 – Day 8

✠. Come, let us worship Jesus Christ, the King of kings.

✠. Come, let us worship Jesus Christ, the King of kings.

✠. The Lord's is the earth and its fullness, the world and all that is in it. It is he who set it on the seas; on the waters he made it firm.

✠. Come, let us worship Jesus Christ, the King of kings.

A kingdom that is like leaven in the dough.

The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened.

Matthew 13:33

(moment of silence)

REFLECTION

Christ sent his disciples out among the people to be his representatives and witnesses. After learning from Him, we must be prepared to go out and witness to a life that has been transformed by him, starting with the smallest ways that can actually become transformative, especially when our example begins to touch others.

CONCLUDING PRAYER

✠. Let us pray:

Lord Jesus, teach us to be courageous in making you present here and now, wherever we are, becoming the leaven of society that is capable of bringing about so many changes with the power of simplicity, and with the strength of your love. Through Christ our Lord.

✠. Amen.

✠. Christ, reigning in our daily lives,

✠. Thy Kingdom Come!

Saturday November 25th, 2023 – Day 9

✠. Come, let us worship Jesus Christ, the King of kings.

✠. Come, let us worship Jesus Christ, the King of kings.

✠. The Lord's is the earth and its fullness, the world and all that is in it. It is he who set it on the seas; on the waters he made it firm.

✠. Come, let us worship Jesus Christ, the King of kings.

A Kingdom that is the treasure hidden in a field.

The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in a field, which someone found and hid; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

Matthew 13:44

(moment of silence)

REFLECTION

Jesus teaches us that He is the treasure that fills our life with meaning. A hidden treasure that we are called to search for; the one we mysteriously find hidden in the needs of others, in our fragility and miseries, in pain, in everything that escapes our control.

CONCLUDING PRAYER

℣. Let us pray:

Lord Jesus, come into our hearts and teach us to find you as the profound and radical answer to our longings and desires, which fills our lives with joy, and for which we are ready to surrender everything. Help us to recognize you present in everything and in everyone, you who are the Kingdom incarnate. Through Christ our Lord.

℞. Amen.

℣. Christ our King,

℞. Thy Kingdom Come!